

Week Ending Friday, June 7, 1996

**The President's Radio Address and
an Exchange With Reporters**

June 1, 1996

The President. Good morning. This week, the people of Israel, in a vigorous, very close election, voted to elect a new Prime Minister. Yesterday, I called Prime Minister-elect Netanyahu to congratulate him on his victory and to discuss America's enduring friendship with Israel, our commitment to its strength and security and to a lasting peace in the Middle East. I also spoke with outgoing Prime Minister Peres. I told him to take comfort in history's judgment. Decades from now, people will look back and see in Shimon Peres one of the great peacemakers of our time. Now, the partnership between Israel and the United States will be the foundation from which our two countries, together, continue to build a comprehensive, lasting, and secure peace in the Middle East.

Now I'd like to turn to the homefront and to some of our most important citizens, our children. Some of them have joined with me today along with their parents here in the Oval Office. And later today, they'll join tens of thousands of people to show their support for America's young people at the Stand for Children at the Lincoln Memorial.

This is an important time for America's children. They're growing up in a world that is changing rapidly. They need our help more than any generation before them. As Hillary says, children are not rugged individualists; they depend upon us—their parents and others in the community who love them—to give them love and guidance and discipline, to provide for them, and to defend them. That's as it should be. Their future and ours depends upon how well we do our job.

If our society sends our children the wrong signals, we should work together to change that. That's why I have proposed strict limits on tobacco advertising directed toward children. That's why we're giving parents the V-

chip and why we worked to persuade the TV networks to develop a rating system so parents can control the shows their children watch. That's why I support parents and communities who want to cut crime and improve discipline by adopting things like school uniforms and community curfews.

We are also working in other ways to strengthen our families and childrearing. We've enacted the family and medical leave law so parents can now take time away from their jobs to be with a newborn or an ill child without losing those jobs. We're immunizing our children more than ever. We've increased Head Start funding. We're making sure that teen mothers stay in school and turn their lives around. We've preserved the Federal school lunch program, which this week turns 50 years old and every school day helps 25 million of our children get the nutrition they need.

All of this makes a difference, but none of it matters as much as the most basic protection of all for our young people, their health care. Without medical care, a child who needs it cannot have a full life. That's why I deeply oppose the Republican plan to repeal the guarantee of quality health care for our children.

For three decades through the Medicaid program, we have had a national commitment that poor children, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and older Americans will not be denied health care simply because they can't afford it. That means today that working parents know in the awful event their child is disabled and their insurance and income won't cover the care, they'll get some help to keep their children at home. They know if their child becomes seriously ill and their savings are gone, they'll get some help so that they can hold the family together and keep working and going on.

Now, under the Republican congressional plan, hundreds of thousands of our children with disabilities could lose help for their

home care. Children that are seriously ill could lose some of their coverage from what is now available. In effect, this plan says to millions of our children, if you can't afford care, well, it's an option whether your State gives it or not, and they don't have to contribute as much as they used to. It says to people with disabilities, if you don't have insurance, I'm sorry if you don't happen to be able to get care from your State anymore. This could amount to child neglect for a whole generation.

Now, I vetoed this plan last year when the Republican Congress shut down the Government in an effort to force me to sign it. If they send it to me again, I will veto it again. In an attempt to force me to sign it, the Republicans are threatening to attach this proposal to welfare reform.

For nearly two decades, I've worked to end welfare as we know it. I want us to require more work, impose strict time limits, to crack down on child support enforcement. In the last 3½ years, without any congressional action, we have worked with 38 States to change old Federal rules so that we can move people from welfare to work. The rolls are down 1.3 million people, and child support collections are up nearly 40 percent.

Of course, we should do more. And we can reach agreement on sweeping bipartisan welfare reform legislation. But I will never accept the repeal of guaranteed health care for poor children or people with disabilities or older Americans or pregnant women. I don't care what bill they attach that to, I will not accept it.

These young people with me today and their families will take part in the stand for all our children that is unprecedented. Where our children are concerned, we should all stand together, and we should not be small. Our children are counting on us.

Thanks for listening.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, following the Israeli election, is there a message you'd like to send to the Arab world?

The President. Yes. Our policy hasn't changed. We still want an honorable peace in the Middle East. And we want all peace-loving people, especially those who have

been our friends and allies in the Arab world, to continue to work for that. I was very encouraged by what King Hussein said in his most recent reported remarks. And I hope that the friends of peace in the Arab world and the Middle East will continue to support it, and we will continue to work with them.

Q. Do you think there's undue concern in some of the Arab world? You know, this election, which was decided by less than 30,000 votes is out of—was at 3 million. It's being viewed as some kind of massive mandate and message. I mean, do you think there's a rush to judgment?

The President. I think we ought to give the new Prime Minister a chance to put his government together and develop a policy. We have—we've been pushing all over the world for democracy. And democracy means the people who vote get to determine who governs. That's what democracy means. Now, he said some very encouraging things to me on the phone and indeed in the election—in the 2 weeks leading up to the election.

I think it's obvious—if you look how closely divided the people of Israel are, I think that you could say an enormous number of the supporters of Prime Minister Peres wanted security as well as peace, and an enormous number of the supporters of Prime Minister-elect Netanyahu wanted peace as well as security. I think that that's what that close election means. It's a difficult environment, a tough neighborhood. There's a lot of history there. But he says he wants to continue the process. And I think that—I hope that the friends of peace in the Arab world will continue to be committed to that.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to King Hussein I of Jordan.

Statement on Arms Reduction Agreements With Russia and Ukraine

June 1, 1996

Ukrainian President Kuchma has announced that all nuclear warheads have been removed from the territory of Ukraine. This is a remarkable achievement. In 1991, there